

Message Text

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ACTION NEA-10

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TAGS: PINT, IS

SUBJECT: INTERNAL POLITICS: THE POT CONTINUES TO SIMMER

1. AN EXCHANGE OF ANGRY WORDS AT LAST SUNDAY'S (AUGUST 22) WEEKLY CABINET MEETING LED TO BRUISED FEELINGS AMONG THE MINISTERS AND TO A SUBSEQUENT RABIN APOLOGY. MINISTER OF TOURISM MOSHE KOL (INDEPENDENT LIBERALS) RAISED THE QUESTION OF RE-QUIRING HOSPITAL SERVICE BY ORTHODOX GIRLS WHO ARE EXEMPT FROM MILITARY SERVICE ON GROUNDS OF RELIGIOUS CONVICTIONS. (APPARENTLY KOL RAISED THE QUESTION IN THE CONTEXT OF THE SHORTAGE OF NURSES WHICH IS UNDERLINED BY A CURRENT NURSES' STRIKE.) KOL HAD INTENDED THE QUESTION SPECIFICALLY FOR DEFENSE MINISTER PERES WHO WAS ABSENT FROM THE CABINET MEETING. HOWEVER, RABIN WHO WAS OBVIOUSLY ANNOYED BY THE QUESTION AND ITS TIMING, RETORTED THAT IT WAS "A DEMAGOGIC PROPOSAL DELIBERATELY INTENDED TO BE LEAKED TO THE PRESS" AND THAT IT WAS ILLOGICAL SINCE SENIOR NURSES AND NOT TRAINEES WERE NEEDED. KOL THEREUPON WALKED OUT OF THE MEETING IN A HUFF, RETURNING AFTER A BIT WITH A NOTE FOR RABIN REQUESTING AN APOLOGY.

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2. THE FOLLOWING DAY (AUGUST 23) THE GOVERNMENT PRESS

OFFICE ISSUED A STATEMENT SAYING RABIN AND KOL HAD MET THAT MORNING AT THE FORMER'S INVITATION AND THE PRIME MINISTER HAD CONVEYED HIS REGRET FOR WHAT HE HAD SAID AT THE CABINET MEETING AND THAT "HE VALUES MINISTER KOL AND HAS NO DESIRE TO HURT HIM."

3. THE INCIDENT AND THE UNUSUAL, IF NOT UNPRECEDENTED, EXPRESSION OF REGRET APPEARS TO BE ANOTHER INSTANCE OF DISHARMONY IN RABIN'S CABINET. SOME SEE THE PUT-DOWN OF KOL AS JUSTIFIED SINCE, AS RABIN IMPLIED, RAISING THE ISSUE OF DRAFT DEFERMENTS IN THE ABSENCE OF THE DEFENSE MINISTER BRINGS KOL'S MOTIVES INTO QUESTION. KOL IS KNOWN TO HAVE NEEDLED THE GOVERNMENT ON THIS MATTER ON VARIOUS EARLIER OCCASIONS.

4. IN A CONVERSATION AUGUST 26, MK DOV ZAKIN (MAPAM) TOLD US HE HAS HEARD RUMORS OF CHANGES IN THE CABINET BEFORE LONG. ZAKIN BELIEVES RABINOWITZ WILL BE NAMED SECRETARY GENERAL OF THE LABOR PARTY AND CHAIM BAR LEV WILL REPLACE HIM AS MINISTER OF FINANCE. MEIR AMIT, PRESIDENT OF KOOR INDUSTRIES, WILL BE BROUGHT INTO THE CABINET TO FILL BAR LEV'S PRESENT SLOT OF MINISTER OF INDUSTRY AND COMMERCE. WRITING IN YEDIOT ACHRONOT, SHLOMO NAKDIMON SAYS THAT TRANSPORT MINISTER GAD YAACOB AND BANK HAPOLIM PRESIDENT YAACOV LEVINSON ARE ALSO BEING CONSIDERED IN LABOR PARTY CIRCLES ALONG WITH BAR LEV AS REPLACEMENTS FOR RABINOWITZ. HE TOO MENTIONS THE POSSIBILITY THAT AMIT WILL BE BROUGHT INTO THE CABINET. (COMMENT: IF TRUE, THE DROPPING OF RABINOWITZ, WHO IS UNPOPULAR AMONG THE ISRAELI PUBLIC, AND THE ADDITION OF AMIT AND/OR LEVINSON, BOTH REGARDED AS FORCEFUL AND HIGHLY CAPABLE, WOULD ADD NEEDED LUSTER TO THE RABIN CABINET AS ELECTION TIME APPROACHES. ON THE OTHER HAND, SOME OBSERVERS BELIEVE THAT RABIN WANTS RABINOWITZ TO REMAIN IN THE CABINET UNTIL THE ELECTIONS.)

5. MEANWHILE, IT WAS REVEALED AUGUST 25 THAT ISRAEL GRANIT, FORMER CHAIRMAN OF THE LABOR PARTY'S ORGANIZATIONS DEPARTMENT AND A FORMER GENERAL, HAD LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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QUIT THE PARTY AND JOINED SHINUI (CHANGE). THE LATTER IS A REFORMIST PARTY THAT WAS FOUNDED IN 1975 BY AMNON RUBENSTEIN, A MEMBER OF HAARETZ' EDITORIAL STAFF. IT ADVOCATES ELECTORAL, ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL REFORM. IN THE ARAB-ISRAEL CONTEXT, SHINUI FAVORS TERRITORIAL COMPROMISE ON ALL FRONTS. MANY THINK YIGAL YADIN MIGHT USE SHINUI AS HIS VEHICLE IN THE NEXT ELECTION. INDEED, GRANIT RECENTLY TRIED TO ENLIST SOME

PROMINENT PERSONALITIES BEHIND YADIN. GRANIT NOW SAYS
HE HOPES THESE PEOPLE WILL JOIN SHINUI.
TOON

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